

Safety Tip of the Month – January 2010
VSI Safety Committee
“Dealing With An Unusual Situation At A Swim Meet”

As Marshal, strutting around the swimming pool venue in your gaudy vest, you may be approached by a swimmer who informs you that an adult had been staring at her (swimmer could of course be either gender) for a long time and had actually followed her to the locker room door. The swimmer states that she is afraid of this adult stranger on the deck. As Marshal, what do you do?

Your first step should be to reassure the swimmer that you are very concerned about her safety, and are glad that she told you about this adult. Get the swimmer's name and her team name. Next, you should ask the swimmer to describe in detail the physical appearance of this adult who was following her. Ask the swimmer if she sees the adult on deck or in the bleachers at this time, and, if so, make sure you can visually spot this person. Determine from the swimmer if this adult appeared to be staring at or following any other swimmers, and, if so, try to obtain their names or at least the team they are associated with. If the swimmer knows of other witnesses to this adult's behavior, find out their names also.

At this point, ask the swimmer to stay with her team and / or coach, and to avoid leaving the swimmer assembly area unless she is with other swimmers or adults. You should notify the Meet Director or Meet Referee, and ask another Marshal (s) on deck to cover your position. Locate the Head Life Guard or the On-Scene Facilities Director, and make them aware of the situation. They will ask you if you want to report this to the local police department. You should request the Facilities Director to call the police department and ask for an officer to come to the pool. Whether or not there is enough evidence or criteria for a formal written police report will be determined by the police officer.

Report back to the coach of the swimmer(s) involved, and let them know the complaints have been taken seriously and are being followed up by the Facilities personnel. Provide an update to the other Marshals and the Meet Director, including a description of the adult.

After talking with the police officer, she/ he may recommend that the Facilities personnel approach this adult and ask him for identification and question why he is at the meet. Let the Facilities personnel do this, preferably when the police officer is on site. **Do NOT interject yourself**, as Marshal, into the middle of a potentially confrontational and dangerous situation. If the adult responds appropriately to the Facilities Director and states he is a spectator at this public swim meet, there is really nothing more you can do at present. If the adult responds inappropriately or rudely to the Facilities Director when questioned or refuses to give identification, he may be asked to leave the venue.

As Marshal, you should provide a brief written summary of the swimmer (s) complaints and the follow-up to the Meet Referee, with copies to the Meet Director and to the Facilities Director. Although time-consuming, the above steps will help maintain the safety of the swimmers at the meet.